

Ortega governs by vote of the people

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Robert Berberich's obvious sincerity in his letter of July 23 makes it even more pathetic in his parroting the propaganda of the far-right preachers who made themselves multi-millionaires by ripping off people's pocketbooks while they ripped off minds by corrupting fact and reality to inspire fear and hatred.

Nicaragua held an election in 1984 under international supervision. Those observers, including our own, said the election was open and fair, much more so than most in that part of the world. Until the next election, the people there have made their decision and it is they, not the extremists like Robert Berberich, who have the sole legal right to decide how they want to live and what government they want. The Ortega government won by almost two-thirds. Whether or not we like their government, they voted for what they have, and that is the real democracy, not the nutty stuff made up by those who hate it.

His claim that they have "a two million man military" is false. It multiplies by hundreds their force of about 50,000, mostly popular militia, not army. (Nicaragua's population is about 3,000,000, girl infants and grandmas included).

Ortega is not "an avowed communist dictator," he did stand for election, and the economy there is almost half private, the rest government.

He says it is "simple common sense" that "food, medicine and medical supplies" be denied the innocent victims of the war the United States started and pursues by proxy. Keeping legless children from having wheelchairs and wooden legs, medicines and food, to him, in his remarkable understanding of Christian belief, is "love and charity" and must be denied so that we "not confirm communist dictatorship." To call this pernicious form of hatred only sick is to praise it.

All the American veterans who organized the scanty relief must by his concepts be "dangerous reds," as must also those Catholic and Protestant preachers to whom this less than minimal assistance in food and medical supplies was consigned.

"What," he asks, "would result" if this meagre cargo of food, medicines and prosthetics to succor innocent children, "were followed by engineers, like Ben Linder?"

Linder was killed in cold blood by the Contras Mr. Berberich loves while building a small water-powered electrical system for a rural village whose people lacked any modern conveniences or benefits. What would result is that life in their primitive society would have been a little less rigorous and the children would have had light to study and read by.

It would have been of absolutely no consequence in the war. Such is Mr. Berberich's concept of "love and charity."

Contrary to his silly claim, no "foreign power" is, has, will or wants to "colonize" Nicaragua and the USSR, which he implies has colonized it, isn't even supplying petroleum or necessary foods. It has no need of any hemisphere base and has more trouble than it can handle without looking for more. This is the utterly baseless self-justification concocted by the ignorant, the stupid, and those who, while dominated by hatred, profess Christian love and dedication to freedom.

For all its sincerity and passion, there isn't a single correct statement of fact in his letter. Its ugly McCarthyite intent is disclosed by the rotten epithet of "cell" applied to an open and public organization affiliated with Clergy and Laity Concerned.

If Mr. Berberich can find any justification for denying crutches, artificial limbs, medicines and food to innocent children victimized by the war he supports and still claim to be a Christian, he ought to read the teachings of Jesus without making them up, too.

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